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BOOK NOTICES

University of Chicago Sermons. By Members of the University Faculties. University of Chicago Press. \$1.50 net.

The sermons of this volume, preached before the University and in some cases before other congregations by professors of the University, are nobly representative of the higher intellectual and religious life of America. The divinity schools are largely represented, though philosophy, sociology, and English also have their voices. All the preachers have had theological training, a few the experience of pastors; but the reader without personal knowledge of the men will feel that the sermons are the messages of students and teachers and not of men in the active ministry. They show the "dyer's hand." A keen critic could tell what the preacher was studying and teaching. It ought to be so, and the sermons are the better for this. The sermon must be a personal message—"God's word through a man." And these sermons in a very marked way breathe the life of the preacher. The *style* shows less of the university atmosphere than the thought. With two or three exceptions, where the form is distinctly that of the lecture with little thought of the average hearer, the style has the oral quality that grips and holds attention by its direct, sincere, virile quality. The classroom today is not separate from life, and the teacher speaks of real things and has a realism of style in harmony with the best books and the best public speech. It would be a stiffening of the careless colloquialisms of the popular pulpit, a purifying from its worldly vulgarity, to take a thorough course in such sermons.

It is a pleasure to feel the positive, constructive note in most of the sermons. The past is not in ruins, "an emptied shrine." They are not "impatient of the world's fixed way." And in the effort to express truth in the present tense, the mark of all the real preachers from Paul to our time, they recognize the worth of what others have done. There is no better example of this magnanimity, this perspective of faith, than the sermon, "The Test of Religion."

There is a tone of apologetic in many of the sermons, the consciousness of a critical if not questioning audience. You see the microscope or the pair of scales that have been used in the critical process. It is a discussion of a problem of religion, of a truth about Christ, not always the giving of the evangel. A distinguished judge of Massachusetts on a church committee for securing a new pastor said that the members wanted a man with a message to the heart and conscience; the weakness of the New England pulpit was its endless discussions about the gospel. Dr. John Watson tells of a great scientist who attended his ministry in Liverpool, who

was indifferent or restless if the preacher discussed any problem of science or religion, but when he presented Christ as the message of life would often come round in the afternoon and talk it over.

Christ is the "eternal contemporary," the message of life for the modern pulpit as for the age of the Apostles. And the living Christ has three values for our pulpit: he is the power of new life for men in their moral weakness, he teaches and inspires the noblest character, he gives the law and motive for social relationships. The second and third aspects of Christ's work chiefly fill these sermons and they are treated with clearness and persuasiveness. "Manufactured Gods" forces a man to face God's will in Christ. "The Everlasting Kingdom of Righteousness" and "The New Heaven and the New Earth" open the eyes to see the forming of the Kingdom of God, and "The Way to the Unseen" interprets the social bonds as the ministers of the Spirit.

The first phase of Christ's work is not wholly lacking. "The Salt of the Earth" and "The Voice of God" witness to the saving message of the gospel. Should not the pulpit often present the living Christ as meeting the need of moral weakness and failure? There are men in the university quite as helpless without Christ as men in the slums. The gospel we preach must be a redemption if it is to have ethical power.

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The Asiatic Dionysos. By Gladys M. N. Davis. New York: Macmillan, 1914. Pp. xii+276. \$3.25.

This book traces the origin of the Dionysiac cult to the Aryans, a theory set forth some sixty years ago by M. Langlois. Miss Davis shows traces of Asiatic influence on Greek philosophy and literature. Dithyrambic poetry, for instance, like classical Sanskrit, is characterized by great sparingness in the use of the article and of certain conjunctions, a love of long compound nouns, and a strong tendency to use relative copulae and participial forms, a love of alliteration and of repetition and the use of extravagant metaphors. That there was also a strong Medic influence in Athens in the time of Socrates is quite certain and Miss Davis makes a strong case for it. There was close connection between Asia and Greece as early as the sixth century. In Indian mythology there are two gods which answer to Dionysos: the first is Soma (the Haoma of the Avesta) and the second is Shiva. Shiva-worship is, however, of late origin and is not to be compared therefore to Dionysiac worship.

Soma was the name of a plant from which an intoxicating liquor was extracted; it was also the name of a god, which assumed divers shapes in Indian mythology. Miss Davis finds several points of similarity between the figure of Dionysos and that of Soma. Do these point to a more or less direct influence of Indian mythology upon Greece so that Soma can be properly called the prototype of Dionysos or can they be explained by the development of a common type which became Dionysos among the Phrygians and the Greeks, and among the Aryans of India, Soma? Miss Davis has brought forth excellent arguments for her thesis; but somehow it is difficult to see through what channels Indian influence exerted itself upon Phrygia or Greece. It could be only through Babylon, where there are no traces of Soma-worship. We shall grant to Miss Davis that our knowledge of Babylon is still very limited and that an argument from silence does not carry very far except sometimes as a demonstration of our ignorance. It remains that her book will be a noteworthy contribution to the study of comparative religion: it is the work of one who possesses the sound philological training without which studies of that type are only shallow generalizations.

The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament. By Sir W. M. Ramsay. New York: Hodder & Stoughton, 1915. Pp. xiv+427. \$3.00.

This book is not designed to report new discoveries in the field of New Testament study, but to estimate the apologetic value of the new information which has come to light in more recent years and is already known to scholars. Also the form of presentation is popular, the principal part of the book being composed of the James Sprunt Lectures delivered at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia in the autumn of 1913.

As everyone knows, the author is a veteran explorer of Central Asia Minor, but the present work is mainly a defense of his personal views as to the correct applications of his discoveries rather than a simple statement of archaeological data. This interest is made to justify the insertion of an introductory biographical chapter, which, however, does not describe the events of the author's career as an explorer but shows how Providence had led him, often against his own will, into this work in order that—so he apparently would have us infer—he might become a defender of traditional views regarding the literal historical accuracy particularly of the Lukan writings. On the other hand, those who have given less credit to Luke are said to be prompted by a desire "to discredit the superhuman element in the history. Their hostility to Luke arose out of their refusal to admit the

superhuman element in the government of the world."

Passages like this indicate the author's leading interest, which determines the plan of his work. As he himself says, "there is no attempt to follow a strictly scientific order," but the order followed is designed to exhibit the development of his own personal opinions with respect to the trustworthiness of the New Testament as a supernatural historical record. Consequently he is particularly interested to establish the reliability of "the episodes in the First and Third Gospels describing the circumstances of the Savior's birth, No one can comprehend Luke or Matthew so long as his mind is clogged with the old ideas about the puerility and untrustworthiness of those episodes."

These sentences indicate the aim of the whole, namely, the establishment of supernaturalism as the underlying principle of all the New Testament writings. This result is attained by examining a few representative passages which have been "exposed to hostile criticism," and a defense of these is thought to justify the conclusion that "the New Testament is unique in the compactness, the lucidity, the pregnancy, and the vivid truthfulness of its expression." Recent discovery is made to contribute toward this end by showing that these data, when correctly expounded, support the author's thesis. To those who are at the outset in agreement with his thesis the argument may prove satisfactory; other readers may find the book useful chiefly for the valuable grains of archaeological fact which can be sifted from the chaff of interpretation.

Buddhist Psychology. By Mrs. C. A. F. Rhys Davids. London: G. Bell. Pp. xii+212. \$1.00.

It is difficult to trace with certainty how much of the scholastic teaching of Buddhism goes back to the founder of that religion. There are two great divisions in Buddhism: Southern Buddhism, preserved mainly in Ceylon, and Northern Buddhism, still powerful in Thibet, China, Korea, and Japan. The Buddhism of Burma and Siam is of an intermediate type. Mr. and Mrs. Rhys Davids have done a remarkable work in the study of Southern Buddhism, and have edited and translated a number of texts written in the Pali language. In this volume of the "Quest" series Mrs. Rhys Davids takes up the subject of Buddhist psychology as set forth in those Pali sources which go back to the first three centuries of our era. It is hard to believe that the Abhidhamma texts, many of which were composed eight centuries after Buddha's death, give us a very accurate description of his teaching. India is a land where metaphysical thought was busily at work, and it may safely be assumed that Gautama's pragmatic method of *via media* was more